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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

2017

## Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: June 27, 1980

SUBJECT: Human Rights in Argentina

**PARTICIPANTS:** Emilio Mignone, Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, Mr. Alvarez, Argentine Information Service Center, Perla Mattgarten and Maria Eugenia Casarelli, both members of the Madres del Plaza de Mayo, Patricia Feeney, Amnesty International London, Mr. Eaton, John Andre (notetaker)

Mr. Mignone spoke for the group through most of the conversation. He explained that the Madres were at a conference in Wisconsin and had later met with 40 delegations who were members of the UNHRC at the UN in New York. The meetings with the UN delegations were successful in increasing understanding of the Argentine human rights problem.

Mr. Mignone reported that there have been three documented disappearances in Argentina this year. The latest disappearance, of a Francisco Miller on May 22, had not been reported before. Miller had later been found dead, reportedly of cardiac arrest, and no marks of torture were found on the body. Mr. Alvarez said that information on these disappearances would be forwarded to the Desk. Mignone commented that the system of disappearances still exists in Argentina, but that it is more "selective" and avoids involving innocent people. He stressed the importance of the U.S. Embassy's continuing to make representations on disappearances. He said that the GOA has "cut relations" with the IAHRC since the publication the their report, and no longer answers inquiries from

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

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Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

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-2-

that organization. Mignone received 500 copies of the IAHRC report from the OAS here in Washington, and these along with 130 other copies will be sent back to Argentina. It remains to be seen, he said, whether Argentine customs will permit these copies to enter the country. Mignone's group in Argentina tried to get the report printed in Argentina, but no printer would take the job. His group will have 1,000 mimeographed copies ready for distribution in a few weeks.

Mr. Mignone mentioned the reports of holding the OASGA in Argentina this year. He understood that governments might have their own ideas about the location of the General Assembly, but what is important is the attitude of governments toward the IAHRC, which he hopes will receive support.

Mr. Mignone commented on what he sees as a worsening situation in Argentina since the April bank crisis. He was pessimistic about the economic policy options open to the GOA. Regarding the current political situation, he still sees General Viola as the front runner for selection as President. He also mentioned that the Peronists would not participate in the GOA sponsored political dialogue, as the GOA could never meet their conditions.

Finally, Mr. Mignone speculated that pressure from his and other human rights groups on the courts will in turn place more pressure on the GOA. The end result, he believes, will be an amnesty law to protect those who engaged in counter-terrorist activities. This would be an admission of guilt on the part of the military.

Ms. Feeney then spoke of her organization's concern over reports that Argentines are disappearing in other countries. She cited the cases of two persons travelling in South America, who AI believes disappeared during a 5 hour period in the Caracas airport. The former mayor of Buenos Aires was killed in Paris. Six Argentines, she said, disappeared in Peru. The Argentine intelligence service is responsible for these events, she said. Her organization believes that now that disappearances have stopped within Argentina, the GOA continues the practice in countries outside Argentina. She compared this to the similar practice of the Libyan Government.

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-3-

The Madres del Plaza de Mayo expressed their concern over U.S. support for human rights in Argentina. Mr. Eaton responded, reassuring them that we will continue to pursue improvements in the observance in human rights because this is one of our fundamental values.

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